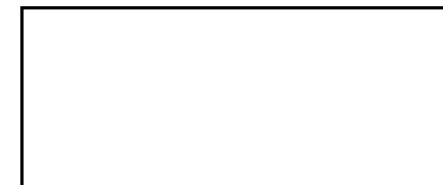


26 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant for Public Affairs to the DCI
SUBJECT : Release of CIA's Crop Estimates

1. Attached is a letter received by this Agency on 18 April from Mr. Roe C. Black, Executive Editor of the Farm Journal. However, due to internal routing problems it was not received by this office until the afternoon of 25 April. Because of serious publicity implications to the Agency your office may be compelled to make some kind of immediate response.
2. The request was apparently prompted by an article in the monthly Newsletter ACA UPDATE, published by the Agriculture Council of America. In boldface at the bottom of the article is a statement encouraging farmers to write the CIA for our next estimate of Soviet crops. The Agency's address is also included.
3. Farm Journal, if not otherwise advised, could continue to foster the rumor that CIA crop estimates are available to the public, creating both adverse publicity and a voluminous amount of public inquiry.
4. Mr. Black should be telephoned as soon as possible advising him that CIA crop estimates are not available to the public, but only to the USDA and those appropriate government officials who have a need for crop intelligence.



Chief
Environment and Resource
Analysis Center, OGCR

Attachments: (2)

1. Letter from Farm Journal.
2. Memo to Asst. for Public Affairs, DCI dated 20 Apr 77. (w/encl.)

cc: OGC
DDI
OER/



Farm Journal

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

230 WEST WASHINGTON SQUARE / PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19105 / 215-574-1200

April 14, 1977

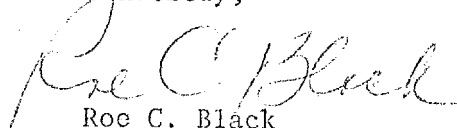
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Gentlemen:

I would appreciate it if you would send me a copy of the CIA's next estimate of Soviet crops that is scheduled for mid-May.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,



Roe C. Black
Executive Editor

RCB:mes

20 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant for Public Affairs to the DCI

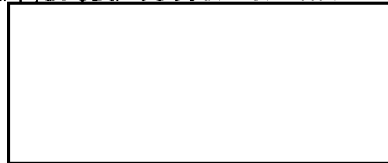
SUBJECT : Release of CIA's Crop Estimates

1. Attachment A was brought to our attention by the USDA public relations office. My concerns are the erroneous statements that CIA's crop estimates are publicly available. Left as is, we will be deluged with requests for CIA crop information.

2. The facts are that the CIA's crop estimates are classified and the CIA does not make its estimates available to American farmers or to any other sector of the general public.

3. We recommend that your office contact the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) directly to advise them of the above and, further, to request ACA to publish an appropriate clarification in ACA UPDATE.

4. Attachment B is a suggested letter to the ACA.

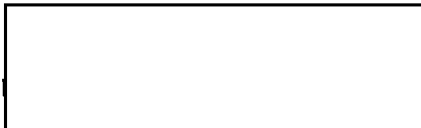


Chief,
Environment and Resource Analysis Center
Geographic and Cartographic Research

Attachments: 2

- A. ACA UPDATE, March 1977
- B. Suggested letter to ACA

cc: OGC
DDI
OER/



Approved For Release 2005/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000100020005-8

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

STAT

D-R-A-F-T
OCCP/DDI

20 April 1977

Agriculture Council of America
Suite 708
1625 Eye Street, Northwest
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Sirs:

With respect to your article in the March 1977 edition of ACA UPDATE entitled Spooks in the Wheat Fields by Ed Murray, you should be aware that CIA agricultural estimates are classified and are not available to farmers or any other sector outside the U.S. Government.

Our Agency would appreciate an appropriate and prompt clarification of this matter in a subsequent issue of ACA UPDATE. Otherwise we will be deluged with requests for classified information to which we cannot respond.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert E. Hetu
Assistant for Public Affairs to the DCI



also points to the feeling of community that develops when a cooperative venture is undertaken. Maintaining that feeling of community while she is living across town in the vice-presidential mansion is an important factor contributing to her continued participation.

The thousands of buying clubs like Mrs. Mondale's demonstrate that a

lettuce and carrots—all for \$5.

But while co-op shoppers like Mrs. Mondale get fresher products, save money, and have fun doing it, they never affect more than a small part of their own household budgets and are not apt to develop any economic clout.

But the greatly expanded number and types of food co-ops indicates that the

In certain areas, the larger, more established food co-ops do. The Cooperative League estimates that 500,000 families buy \$500 million worth of groceries and other products at established co-ops. The seven largest co-ops do a total of about \$280 million sales a year. They are, in order of size: Berkeley (California), UNICOOP (Puerto Rico), Greenbelt

members internally through one vote system.

PARTICIPATION:

An obvious question—put do co-ops get from shopper? According to the editor of Greenbelt Summer letter, the input is the motivation of the co-op is important to point out the shoppers at established members.

Spooks In The Wheat Fields

by Ed Murray

Editor's Note: This story is a special to UP-DATE. The author is a freelance writer, based in Washington, D.C., specializing in economic and consumer affairs.

If a shifty-looking character in a tan trench coat approaches you with an offer of a CIA report don't rush off to the FBI. The report may be the unclassified annual CIA assessment of crop yields in the Soviet Union—a report that the spy agency says it is happy to make available to American farmers.

As a result of the disastrous disruption of grain markets in 1972 when everyone seemed to underestimate the Soviet Union's need for wheat, the CIA and the Department of Agriculture have beefed up their ability to make more accurate estimates of crop yields.

Despite the availability of high technology computers and satellites at the CIA and the extensive resources of USDA, including agricultural attaches overseas, the official estimates have not always been right on target. As one USDA official put it, "It's rather presumptuous of us to think that we can estimate Soviet yields when you consider all the problems we have right here in the U.S. where we can get detailed information on weather, fertilizer availability, seed prices and so on."

Nevertheless, both agencies do try to estimate Soviet grain production. And typically, there is bureaucratic chauvinism that prompted one USDA official to say that "we don't use the CIA data or report in making our estimates."

It's not that USDA considers the CIA data to be unreliable—estimates by both agencies have been fairly close the past few years—but as a CIA spokesman said, "We do ours, they do theirs," and if there's a difference, policy makers can have a range within which to make their judgments.

At the Department of Agriculture, a special task force on Soviet grain production was established after the big 1972 grain purchases. The task force, chaired by Donald Novotny, is made up of representatives from the Foreign Agricultural Service, Economic Research Service, Soil Conservation Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service.

The task force meets monthly and looks at weather data supplied by the Air Force, Soviet agricultural trade publications, and attache reports, and estimates on a region by region, crop by crop basis of how the Russian crops are doing.

The CIA's next estimate of Soviet crops is scheduled for mid-May and is available to farmers by writing to the Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., 20505.

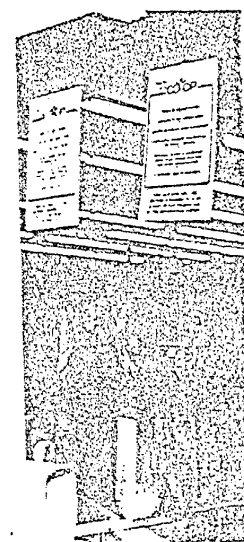
The CIA, on the other hand, uses satellite imagery and sophisticated computers in addition to the standard tools employed by USDA to come up with its own estimates.

From a sampling of areas, the spy agency studies satellite imagery to determine what's happening to crops in the field, and then, using its computers, projects total output.

Last year's CIA and USDA estimates were not that far apart. The CIA was a little low, but according to USDA's Novotny, that may have merely reflected differences in the way the Soviets weigh their harvest. Novotny said in Russia they use a "bunker weight" which includes weeds and rocks from the field along with the grain, and weighing isn't done for a standard moisture content.

A further difficulty in making estimates was pointed out by Novotny. Since estimates are really for four separate crops—winter, spring and summer wheat, as well as coarse grains—a low yield of winter wheat may be made up by higher yields for a later wheat crop or one of the coarse grains.

USDA estimates are regularly released to the press as well as published in various market reports.



PARTICIPATION VA co-op members. Co-op the wishes of their member one share vote system motivated, a member of impact."